

REMARKS

Applicant adds new claims 18-21; therefore, claims 1-21 are now pending in this application.

Applicant amends claim 1 more clearly to recite the features of the embodiments claimed therein and to remove unnecessary details. In this regard Applicant notes the addition of the dependent claim 18 and 19.

The Office Action Summary indicates that claims 1-17 stand rejected, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. However, in the detailed action, the Examiner has indicated that only claims 1 and 3-17 stand rejected. In particular, the Examiner sets forth the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) of claims 1 and 3-17 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,088,717 to Hamanaka et al. (Hamanaka), and claims 1 and 3 as being anticipated by JP 4-323137 to Shibata et al. (Shibata). A close review of the Examiner's detailed rejections based on Hamanaka appears to indicate that the Examiner has alleged that all of the features recited in Applicant's claim 2 are disclosed in Hamanaka (see Office Action, page 2, lines 14-16). Thus, it appears that the Examiner intended to include claim 2 in the §102(b) rejection based on Hamanaka (this is consistent with the Office Action Summary).

Applicant addresses the Examiner's prior art rejections accordingly, and respectfully traverses these rejections as follows.

Applicant's independent claim 1 provides an apparatus for separating and feeding printing paper sheets, the apparatus comprising a unique combination of features, including, *inter alia*, a separating/transferring roller for sucking a paper sheet from a paper stack on a paper tray and delivering the paper sheet to a scanning unit, the separating/transferring roller being configured with the lower surface thereof facing an upper window of the scanning unit (*see* Applicant's claim 1).

Contrary to the Examiner's analysis, Hamanaka does not disclose, or even remotely suggest such a unique combination of features. In particular, Hamanaka discloses a paper feeding apparatus where a document D1 is sucked up from the document stacker 201 by suction

cylinder unit 230, conveyed by intermediate conveyance rollers 261, 262 into contact position between the conveyance belt 220 and the platen glass 102, and “conveyed on the platen glass 102 by the conveyance belt 220 synchronously with the exposure speed and exposed by the stationary optical system 110 so that the document image can be formed on a photoreceptor drum” (*see Id.*, col. 11, line 32 through col. 14, line 11; and Figs. 1, 8A, 9, 11A, 12 and 13).

Thus, in contradistinction to Applicant’s claim 1, Hamanaka does not disclose, teach or suggest an apparatus for separating and feeding printing paper where a separating/transferring roller, which sucks individual paper sheets from the paper stack on the paper tray and delivers the individual paper sheets to a scanning unit, is configured with the lower surface thereof facing an upper window of a scanning unit. Instead, in Hamanaka, suction cylinder unit 230 is configured to transfer paper sheets from document stacker to intermediate conveyance rollers which convey the paper sheets into contact position between the conveyance belt 220 and the platen glass, so that that the paper sheets can be conveyed on the platen glass 102 by the conveyance belt 220 and exposed to the stationary optical system 110. (*see Id.*, Figs. 1 and 13).

On the other hand, Shibata does not disclose the location of a scanning unit, and therefore, does not disclose or suggest the configuration of a separating/transferring roller with respect to a scanning unit, as recited in applicant’s claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant’s independent claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-17 (which incorporate all the novel and unobvious features of their base claim), are not anticipated by (i.e., are not readable on) Hamanaka or Shibata at least for these reasons.

Finally, Applicant adds new independent claims 20 and 21, which parallel claim 1, and define an apparatus and a method, respectively, in order to more full cover in the claims various aspects of Applicant’s invention as described in Applicant’s specification and illustrated in Applicant’s drawings.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application with claim 1-21 are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephonic interview,

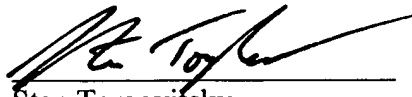
AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111

Appln. No.: 10/821,859

the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 18-2220. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stan Torgovitsky', written over a horizontal line.

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